

Mimulus Memo



Native Plant Gardening **How It All Started**

by Monica Tudor

FEBRUARY/MARCH 2013

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FEBRUARY

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21 — Meeting, 7pm

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HOW DOES A PASSION GROW? In my case, it was sparked because the county cleared out the drainage sump next to my house. When my family moved to Rosedale, it was still considered the outskirts of town. I could ride my horse down to the end of the block and be on dirt roads all the way to the river. Views of fields and mountains were unobstructed by anything except the haze. In the course of time those views changed: the dirt roads are now paved and punctuated with schools, shopping malls and homes. However, the drainage sump that was next to my house remained an area of wildness. With sloped sides and an almost continual source of water, this little Eden was a mini botanical garden that acted as habitat for hordes of hummingbirds and a variety of other critters including the occasional possum, snake, or kestrel. In the bottom muck, cattails and sedges grew. A volunteer sycamore had grown at least 15 feet tall, its trunk a few feet up from the water level. Further up the slope, on the south facing side, a palo verde grew. Sunflowers, weeds and all kinds of other plants grew on the slopes of the sump. All was well with my little world.



An unassuming beginning.

I decided to create a garden-habitat in my yard, so that the critters would always have a place and the county couldn't come along and clear it out.

One summer a few years ago, the county decided it all had to go. I'm not sure why. But the outcome was not a pretty sight. A giant machine ripped up all the vegetation, leaving just a puddle at the bottom and bare slopes up the sides. At first, the impact on the critters wasn't noticeable. A few more hummingbirds came to the feeders in my back yard, but they didn't seem to be perturbed.

How it all Began *(Continued)*



Boulders, terracing and defining edges in place, natives begin to take hold.

However, the wholesale clearing of habitat bothered me a lot. I decided to create a garden/habitat in my yard, so that the critters would always have a place and the county couldn't come along and clear it out. Because of all the development in the neighborhood my horse no longer lived at home, so the now unused horse corral would become my California garden. I asked a local landscape designer draw up some plans, selecting plants that would attract hummingbirds and butterflies. I tweaked the plant selections a bit so natives would be emphasized, and looked at lots of native nursery Internet sites for plants that would be suitable. Plants would be considered suitable if they were native, or drought tolerant, or a food source to hummers and butterflies (caterpillar or adult) or provided shelter. If the plants fit all the requirements, so much the better. That first year, even though the garden was still very sparse, it was discovered by and populated with plenty of hummers and butterflies, along with bunches of lizards and toads, and once, even a visiting cottontail.

The fall migration after the sump was cleared revealed the numbers of hummers impacted by the loss of habitat. The garden was infested with swarms of hummers. The birds were zipping by within inches of my face, oblivious to my presence. They wouldn't wait for me to put up the feeder, but would perch on it while it was still in my hand. I was enthralled. Come to think on it later, they were probably frantic since their migration accommodations had been ripped up, but that might be putting human emotions on an animal. In any case, my passion for native plant gardening and habitats came full bloom that fall.

In my California garden there is a connection

between the plants, the critters, and me. This habitat was created so the animals would have a place to live - but it gives me a place to live, too. It is more than just a garden. It gives me a quiet place to pray and think, where laundry, bills, or chores are far away. I can sit on a bench and quietly watch what is going on or putter happily. I've discovered which twigs are favored as hummingbird perches, which rocks are the favorites for sunning lizards and which vines the gulf fritillary caterpillars will eat by the end of summer. There is always something blooming, sprouting, or setting seed. No wonder I'll go out for just a quick check and come back hours later with a smile on my face.

Thank you to:

Stephen Cooley, our *Mimulus Memo* Editor and Web Master, for his 7 plus years of service to Kern CNPS. Stephen's efforts kept us all connected, told the world about our activities, and offered our plant lists of specific locations to plant searchers from everywhere. His donations of annual fees for the web site was above and beyond! We appreciate you and your efforts on Kern CNPS' behalf, Stephen.

Randi McCormick, for the use of her office, and many chairs from many rooms, for our meetings to revive our chapter.

Paul Gipe, for inspiring, pushing, and leading our re-organization.

Patty and Dale Gradek and Lucy Clark for providing snacks to fuel our meetings.

Laura Stockton for finding and arranging for our new meeting place, Hall Ambulance's Community Meeting Room.

All of the people who offered to take on a task to keep Kern CNPS moving forward.

FIELD TRIPS

by Lucy Clark, Patty and Dale Gradek

KERN CNPS FIELD TRIPS are open to all. Occasionally, numbers will be limited by the land owners or agencies. We welcome you to join us to see and learn about our native plants and their habitats, to learn to identify plants, or to photograph them. If you are skilled in plant identification, you can help us all learn.

Please always dress in layers, wear boots or shoes you can hike in and bring food and water. You may also want to bring a hat, sunscreen, binoculars, camera, plant lists and useful references such as Kern County Flora and the Jepson Manual, or any book you like. We try to meet at a spot where we can park some cars and car pool to our location to save the air, the gas, the money and make sure that on a "roadside" trip that we will have adequate space to park. CNPS does not arrange car pools; each person does so at the meeting place.

All trips are by reservation only, so we know whom to expect, and how many will be attending each field trip. Each trip will have the contact person listed. Please email the contact person by two days before the field trip and indicate the names of those who will attend. Also, if you or any of your party's plans change and you decide not to attend, please email the contact person and let them know. (For the San Joaquin River Gorge Trip please email Denis Kearns by the date indicated in the description below.)

March 9th, Saturday

POSSIBLE TEJON RANCH FIELD TRIP

Contact **Lucy Clark** at lucyg391@gmail.com if you are interested in attending.

March 23rd, Saturday

RED ROCK CANYON STATE PARK

with Mark Faull

7:45am

Come to see what this lovely desert park has for us this spring! **Mark Faull**, now retired, was the long time ranger there and he compiled a plant list during his tenure. He has expertise on many of the resources in the park including Archeology and Paleontology. He will lead us on a walk to the treasures of RRCSP! Depending on the rains between now and then, we may see: the Red Rock Tarplant (*Deinandra arida*), endemic to the state park, the Red Rock Poppy (*Eschscholzia minutiflora twisselmannii*), endemic to the El Paso and Rand mountains, Charlotte's Phacelia (*Phacelia nashiana*), a beautiful blue limited range watch plant, and a new yet unnamed species of Monkey Flower (we used to think of it as *Mimulus palmeri*). There are restrooms at the Visitors' Center.

Please meet at Taco Bell at the SE corner of Hwy's 58 and 184 (Weedpatch Hwy) at 7:45am for carpooling. After checking maps and choosing car-pools, we will leave promptly at 8:00am. This will be a full day trip. Please contact Lucy Clark at lucyg391@gmail.com by March 21st to let us know if you will attend.



Red Rock Canyon State Park: red and green cliffs.

March 30th, Saturday
SAND RIDGE PRESERVE
 8:30am

This preserve was saved by the first president of Kern CNPS, **Jack Zani-novich**, of Delano. It is now cared for by the Center for Land Management; see the website http://www.cnlm.org/cms/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=68&Itemid=214. Sand



Bakersfield Cactus
 (*Opuntia basilaris* var
treleasei)

Ridge is an island of desert plants in the southern San Joaquin Valley. Some of the plants we hope to see are the Bakersfield Cactus, *Opuntia basilaris* var *treleasei*, among the blooming annuals, *Caulanthus coulteri* (Coulter's jewelflower), *Chaenactis glabriuscula* (yellow pincushion, golden girls), *Malacothrix glabrata* (desert dandelion), *Nicotiana quadrialvea* (Indian tobacco), and the beautiful *Salvia carduacea* (thistle sage). **Ellen Cypher's Plant List** is on our website.

Please meet at the Taco Bell at the SE corner of Hwy's 58 and 184 (Weedpatch Hwy) at 8:30am for carpooling. We will leave promptly at 8:45am. If you know the Preserve, you may meet us at the entrance at 9:00am. We plan a 3-hour, plus or minus visit, although if you want to stay longer, bring a lunch. There are no restrooms. The

trail is gradual, and is appropriate for children or seniors, and short enough that you could leave early if you get tired. Please contact **Lucy Clark** at lucyg391@gmail.com by March 28th to let us know you will attend.

April 6th, Saturday
SHELL CREEK ROAD AREA
 with the San Luis Obispo Chapter
 Time: contact pattygradek@gmail.com

This area is to the northwest of the Carrizo Plain National Monument and has a spectacular abundance and variety of wildflowers in a good rainfall year. We are joining members of the San Luis Obispo Chapter at their annual visit to this site.

Please contact **Patty Gradek** by **April 4th** to let us know if you will attend. She will provide you with the meeting place and time when you RSVP. This



Carrizo Plain 2010: Tidy Tips (*Layia platyglossa*)

Photo courtesy Teddy Lovet

will be a full day trip since the drive to the site is at least two hours.

April 13th, Saturday CARRIZO PLAIN NATIONAL MONUMENT
 with Denis Kearns
 8:30am

Denis Kearns, BLM Botanist, will lead us on the trip to the Carrizo Plain National Monument. This trip will be limited to 20 people due to limits prescribed for such tours in the BLM Management Plan. Therefore, if you want to attend we suggest you contact Patty Gradek at pattygradek@gmail.com early because no more than 20 will be allowed to participate.



Photo Dinah Campbell

Shell Creek Rd. 2010: Silver Bush Lupine (*Lupinus albifrons*)

The Carrizo Plain is a magical, beautiful place – especially in the spring. We may see fiddleneck, filaree, tidy tips, thistle sage, owl's clover, encelia, eriophyllum, parry's mallow and larkspur. Denis may have us assist with plant monitoring for a portion of the day.

Please meet at the parking lot of the BLM office at 3801 Pegasus Drive at 8:30am for carpooling. It will be best to use 4 wheel drive or high clearance vehicles to get to some of the special sites. We will leave promptly at 8:45am. This will be a full day field trip. There are restrooms at the Visitor Center.

April 20th, Saturday

SAN JOAQUIN RIVER GORGE
with Denis Kearns
7:45am

Denis Kearns, BLM Botanist, will be leading a "Bioblitz" to generate a vouchered species list for BLM's San Joaquin River Gorge in Fresno County. This is a beautiful BLM area and it will be possible to take a full day trip on Saturday or participants can spend up to three days and camp overnight at a group campground on Friday and Saturday nights. There are BLM facilities (sheltered area, kitchen, restrooms and outside barbeque) that will be available and we will be able to key and process specimens in the evenings. Please bring your own meals and everything you will need to camp or spend the day. Participants need to register with Denis (dkearns@blm.gov) by April 1st and indicate whether they are coming for the day or will be camping.

This year the "Bioblitz" focuses on plants, but entomologists are also welcome. CNPS members, professional botanists and other scientists are invited. For information on the Gorge see www.blm.gov/cal/st/en/fo/bakersfield/Programs/Recreation_opportunities/SJRG_SRMA.html. This will be a great opportunity to learn and to see an area that many of us are not familiar with.

For those planning to come for just the full day on Saturday, please meet at the parking lot at the BLM office at 3801 Pegasus Drive at 7:45am for carpooling. We will leave promptly at 8:00am. The drive to the Gorge is 2 ½ to 3 hours. For those planning to camp, Denis will provide information when participants register with him.

April 27th, Saturday

DESERT AND WOODLAND TREES AND SHRUBS
with Richard Spjut
8:15am



Photo courtesy Rich Spjut

Green Mormon Tea (*Ephedra viridis*)

Richard Spjut, who has extensive field experience in East Africa, Western Australia and the southwestern US and Mexico in collecting common plants for pharmaceutical screening programs, will lead a tour within Kern County that will focus on identifying characteristics of common trees and shrubs.

This will be an auto-tour type of field trip with frequent stops to see examples of woody plants associated with the blue oak woodland, bladderpod scrub, tentatively Tucker woodland and ephedra (*E. viridis*) scrub, scale broom scrub, creosote scrub, salt scrub, pinyon-juniper woodland, and Joshua tree woodland. The trip will travel east on Highway 58, then north along a portion of Highway 14 and then return to Bakersfield on Highway 178, traveling over Walker Pass and through the Kern River Canyon. This will be a full day trip and it will be important to avoid the temptation of identifying flowering herbs in order to see more variety of trees and shrubs. There will be two or three stops for restrooms.

Richard has prepared a draft of the trees and shrubs of Kern County. Examples for some families with keys to genera, and with links to keys to species on other pages, are presented at www.worldbotanical.com/trees_and_shrubs_of_kern_county.htm. You may also want to consult Nature Alley's images of Trees of Kern County by Alison Sheehy at www.natureali.org/guides/KC_trees.htm.

Please meet at the parking lot at the BLM office at 3801 Pegasus Drive at 8:15am for carpooling. We will leave promptly at 8:30am and will return by approximately 5:00pm. Please contact Patty Gradek at pattygradek@gmail.com by April 25th to let us know you will attend.

Field trips can also be found at kern.cnps.org/field-trips/upcoming-field-trips

PRINT OR SAVE THESE DATES TO YOUR CALENDAR!

Chapter Member Wins Award!

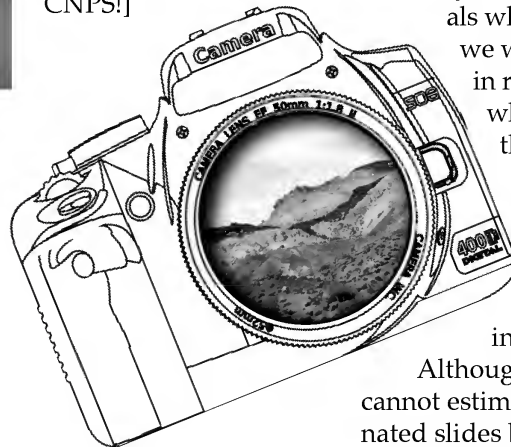
KERN CNPS MEMBER, **Clyde Golden**, won this year's statewide 2012 Rare Plant Treasure Hunt Photo Contest, with his shot of "the only other" pink *Delphinium gracilentum* in Kern Canyon. If you look at Moe's Key with *The Flora of Kern County* by



Delphinium purpusii. First place photo in the 2012 Rare Plant Treasure Hunt Photo Contest, taken by Kern Chapter member, Clyde Golden.

Twisslemann, you will see that there are two pink to rose Delphiniums. But if you read Twisslemann's Flora, you will see that he calls *Delphinium purpusii* "the only rose-pink larkspur native to North America." We hope to see them both on field trips this spring in our Canyon.

[We DO have very special plants here in Kern County. Come see them with CNPS!]



CNPS is the leader for providing reliable information on California native plants and plant conservation. Comprehensive information about California's flora and vegetation communities is available throughout the state for conservation and educational purposes. CNPS's leadership influences personal ethics and actions, as well as public policy for native plant protection.

California Pictorial Landscapes

Photo request for desert habitats

by Deborah Stout

THE CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY (CNPS) is in the process of preparing a new book that will bring the beauty, uniqueness, and value of our state's vegetation to a wide audience. The provisional title of this book is *California's Botanical Landscapes: a Pictorial View of the State's Vegetation*. If you are familiar with the *Manual of California Vegetation* (MCV), you know that, while information rich, it is quite technical. It's fact-filled pages left no space for photographs and general descriptions for the more casual reader who may not have the need, the time, nor the expertise to use it.

California's Botanical Landscapes will fill that gap. It will be photo-rich, and accompanying text will emphasize the most characteristic vegetation of each geographic region in the State, placing it in the context of geology, climate, topography, evolution, and human history.

If you have high quality photographs showing desert-like stands of vegetation in southern Kern County that you would like to contribute to the Photo Book, or if you have recommendations on other individuals who may be good sources of photographs we want to hear from you. We are interested in representative views of vegetation from which you can see the typical patterning of the vegetation type. For digital images the resolution should be at least 2048 x 1536 pixels.

All images donated to CNPS are considered a gift to CNPS for possible inclusion into our photographic collection. Although they should be tax deductible, CNPS cannot estimate or set a value to your donation. Donated slides become the property of CNPS and cannot be returned once included in the collection. CNPS cannot accept use limitations placed on donated images.

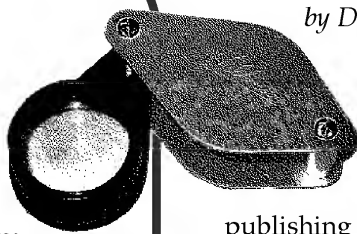
For detailed information on donating photographic images to CNPS, visit www.cnps.org/cnps/vegetation/photo.php. Contact me if you have any questions or would like additional details.

Deborah Stout

Assistant Vegetation Ecologist
California Native Plant Society
2707 K Street, Suite 1, Sacramento, CA 95816
www.cnps.org
Cell: (916) 801-4539
FAX: (916) 324-0475

Chapter Meetings

upcoming TOPICS



Thursday, February 21, 2013 7 pm:

Drs. Anna Jacobsen and R. Brandon Pratt (CSUB, Dept. Biology) will be giving a team presentation on "*Fire and Chaparral: California's Unique and Biodiverse Shrublands*". They will talk about the factors that make California's Mediterranean-type shrublands globally important and interesting as well as the pressing threats to this biodiverse community.

Thursday, March 21, 2013 7 pm:

TBA

Thursday, April 18, 2013 7 pm:

Rich Spjut will give a program on Kern trees and shrubs (see April 27th field trip)

Thursday, May 15, 2013 7 pm:

Dave Clendenen, Wildlands Conservancy — "*Windwolves Preserve - Native Plants and Grazing Management*".

All chapter meetings are held the 3rd Thursday of each month at the Hall Ambulance Community Room 1031 21st Street (21st & N St.), Bakersfield, CA.

Meeting times:

6 pm — Plant identification

7 pm — Program presentation

Newsletter Deadline

by Dinah Campbell

THE MIMULUS MEMO has a green editor (me), and she asks for reader's patience as she learns editing, formatting, mailing and other skills. required for publishing this newsletter.

The quality of *The Mimulus Memo* has always been the product of the generous and knowledgeable contributions of its member subscribers. Your novice editor asks you to continue to support its excellence by submitting your informative articles on botany, natural history, gardening, topical events and educational opportunities relative to Kern County native flora. I lack the honed botanical knowledge and skills that many of you have, and I'll be relying on your input to correct my errors, identify the plants in photos and pointing me to interesting and appropriate material. Your high-resolution (and copyright-free) photos are also hugely appreciated.

Speaking of correcting my errors, I could use a volunteer proof reader.

The deadline for the March-April newsletter is February 15. Contact Dinah Campbell at 872-3 646 or mimulus.memo@gmail.com.



Photo by Andy Honig

Monarch butterfly on *Baccharis emoryi*. Photo taken on the Panorama Vista Preserve, located on the Kern River in north Bakersfield.



Mimulus Memo

Inside this Issue:

SPRING FIELD TRIP DATES & DESCRIPTIONS
NATIVE PLANT GARDENING
MEETING PLACE, DATES & TOPICS



Contacts:
Coordinator – Paul Gipe pgipe@igc.org
President – Dorie Giragosian..... dorengiragosian@peoplepc.com
Vice President – Rich Spjut richspjut@gmail.com
Treasurer – Monica Tudor dosportas@msu.com
Delegate to CNPS Council – Dorie Giragosian dorengiragosian@peoplepc.com
Webmaster – Rich Spjut..... richspjut@gmail.com
Rare Plants – Clyde Golden..... cgold666@hotmail.com
Plant Sale – Dorie Giragosian dorengiragosian@peoplepc.com
– Monica Tudor..... dosportas@msu.com
– (open)
Publicity & Membership – Andy & Sasha Honig..... andym5@bmk.rr.com
Programs – Paul Gipe..... pgipe@igc.org
– Rich Spjut..... richspjut@gmail.com
– Randi McCormick randi@mcconnickbiologicalinc.com
Field Trips – Patty & Dale Gradek..... pattygradek@gmail.com
– Lucy Clark..... lucy391@gmail.com
– Clyde Golden..... cgold666@hotmail.com
Secretary – Sasha Honig..... andym5@bmk.rr.com
Newsletter – Dinah Campbell..... mimulus.memo@gmail.com



CALIFORNIA
NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

The Kern Chapter of the California Native Plant Society meets the third Thursday of each month at Hall Ambulance Community Room, 1013 21st St. (21st & N St), Bakersfield, CA. Chapter Website: kern.cnps.org

The California Native Plant Society is a non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation of California native plants and their natural habitats, and to increasing the understanding, appreciation, and horticultural use of native plants. CNPS has 31 chapters throughout the state and membership is open to all persons — professional and amateur with an interest in California's native plants. Members have diverse interests including natural history, botany, ecology, conservation, photography, drawing, hiking and gardening. As a Kern County resident, your membership includes Eremontia, a quarterly journal with articles on all aspects of native plants; the Bulletin, a statewide report of activities and schedules; and The Mimulus Memo, the newsletter of the Kern Chapter.

Join CNPS or renew your membership online at www.cnps.org.

Student/ Limited Income – \$25

Individual – \$45

Family or Library – \$75

LABEL